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THE PLACE OF FATHER IN THE HOME:

A radio talk prepared by Miss Frances Kelly, Utah State Agricultural College and delivered by Miss Jean Stewart, Home Economist, Bureau of Home Economics, during the Western Farm and Home Hour Wednesday, February 24, 1932, through Station KGO and seven other stations associated with the NBC-KGO network, Pacific Division, National Broadcasting Company.

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Within the last decade the people of the United States have developed a tremendous interest in children and in the much more neglected subject of training for parenthood.

Of course, you would expect mothers to understand the necessity of preparing for parenthood; but the fathers also are parents. They also need to work at the job of parenthood.

All fathers are interested in their children. But how many fathers are interested enough to make an intensive study of how to give the children the training only a father can give? Before investing money, or buying a car, the father spends considerable energy and time in considering the undertaking. How much more important is the training for useful life of boys and girls intrusted to father's care!

Some modern fathers may not see the necessity of education for fatherhood. They say, "My father did an excellent job without any 'education for fatherhood.'" But these men forget that the change in the present-day social conditions demands that our children's fathers be well-trained in the profession of parenthood.

Instead of considering fatherhood as an occupation or as a by-product, think of it as a vocation. One trouble seems to be that nobody has taken the trouble to work out father's position. He is often looked upon as a provider, an errand boy or somebody to be blamed for all the baby's bad traits.

A good father is never so preoccupied with providing food for his wife and children that he takes his companionship away from them. He makes his recreation a part of his children's recreation in order to attain intimacy and companionship with them. He is more than a mere example for them. He cannot be his child's pal because of the difference in ages, but father and son -- or daughter -- can take walks, excursions and have adventures in the out-of-doors. This gives opportunity for worthwhile conversation and the possibility of developing a hobby together. Fathers who share their children's growing time cannot grow old and stiff even if they wish to. And who wishes to? A child who shares his games, work, and stories with his father shares his life with him, opens wide his heart and leaves no dark corners screened to breed strange ways.

Children do not love and trust their parents through instinct, but rather through the comradeship of love and understanding. Many fathers fail to realize until it is too late that it takes more than the mere ability to provide adequately for the family to make a good husband and father. The children of such fathers advance in years without the abundance of pleasant memories which it is in his power to provide for them, and they soon grow to feel they do not need him.

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A very successful and also very preoccupied business man came home one evening, went into his library and, as he usually did, picked up the evening paper and buried himself behind it. His daughter came and sat shyly on the arm of his chair. "Father," she said, "I could love you so much if only I ever had a chance to really know you."

Every successful father realizes that self-suppression, patient understanding and intelligent toleration are essential. The more fully he applies these principles, the greater his success. One of the recompenses of fatherhood is the absurd pride and gentle humility that grows out of the process of fatherhood. It is man's second chance at living.